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Inspection of the application of United Nations recruitment, placement and promotion policies

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Inspection of the application of United Nations recruitment, placement and promotion policies" (JIU/REP/95/1 (Part I)).

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A N N E X

INSPECTION OF THE APPLICATION OF UNITED NATIONS RECRUITMENT, PLACEMENT, AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Part I - Recruitment

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1995

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Acronyms

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CCAQ	Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions
C H R	Centre for Human Rights
CPC	Committee for Programme and Co-ordination
D A M	Department of Administration and Management
DDSMS	Department for Development Support and Management Services
DPI	Department of Public Information
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
ECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HABITAT	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
I B R D	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
I M F	International Monetary Fund
I M I S	Integrated Management Information System
J I U	Joint Inspection Unit
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts
O P S	Office of Personnel Services
P A S	Performance Appraisal System
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall aim of the personnel function of any organization is to make an effective contribution to the achievement of its objectives and to the fulfilment of its responsibilities. In the United Nations, the importance of this had not been given adequate attention for too long until it became clear that deficient personnel policies and practices are the major obstacles to reforming the United Nations, whose responsibilities today are greater than ever before.

In recent years, the General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions on the improvement of human resources management, the establishment of a system of accountability and responsibility and the enhancement of the efficiency of the Secretariat. Over the past several years, some Member States urged the United Nations not only to improve the administration of its human resources but also to become a world leader in personnel management practices. Following the nomination of the new heads of the Department of Administration and Management and the Office of Human Resources Management a major breakthrough was achieved at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The Organization has finally committed itself to move from clerically-oriented and narrow staff administration to human resources management which is a comprehensive, pro-active and positive concept.

Sound and viable human resources management depends on a number of fundamental prerequisites. The first is the existence of open, equitable and transparent human resources management policies. By resolution 47/226, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to review and improve, where necessary, existing policies along these lines. However, progress is still very limited and the recently issued revised version of the Personnel Manual does not contain much new material.

RECOMMENDATION 1. As urged by General Assembly resolution 47/226, the Secretary-General should review and improve all personnel policies and procedures as a matter of priority, with a view to making them more simple, transparent and relevant. These rules and procedures should be brought together in a Human Resources Management Manual to be used as a main reference source by all programme managers and other officials concerned. The revised rules and procedures should be applicable to all entities under the authority of the Secretary-General.

The second prerequisite is the availability of a coherent and responsible mechanism for implementing these policies. Without this mechanism, the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of human resources will be nothing more than a declaration of intent. What is needed above all is a strengthening of the authority and professional skills of OHRM. In this respect, the Inspectors proceed from the following assumptions:

(a) OHRM should serve as a political force within the Organization to promote human resources activities;

(b) OHRM should be enabled to attract qualified human resources professionals who would develop sophisticated practices;

(c) a strengthened OHRM would be an indication of top management's commitment to human resources activities;

(d) OHRM should be an effective guardian of the Secretary-General's authority as the chief administrative officer.

RECOMMENDATION 2. As a matter of priority, the following measures should be taken:

(a) OHRM management capacities should be strengthened and its human resources upgraded both through hiring officials with specific and solid professional education and experience in human resources management and through specific human resources training of the staff already on board;

(b) the Secretary-General should revise the "OHRM" section of the Organization Manual. The functions of OHRM as the central human resources authority, responsible for policy formulation, planning, control and monitoring of human resources as well as the guardian of the Secretary-General's authority should be clearly spelt out;

(c) the Secretary-General, through an administrative instruction or in any other form, should refer to the absolute obligation of all programme managers to abide by human resources management policies and to the unacceptability of practices still common in the Secretariat such as favouritism, circumvention of the principle of competitiveness and interference with the authority of OHRM.

The Inspectors came to the conclusion that an organization as large and complex as today's United Nations cannot function without far-reaching decentralization. In their view, all managers are personnel managers and all managers should operate within the context of well-considered and well-understood objectives, strategies, and policies, including those in the area of accountability and reporting.

The Inspectors note that, recently, some personnel administration functions have been decentralized and that further decentralization and delegation of authority in respect of managing human resources is central to the Secretary-General's strategy. The Inspectors welcome the decentralization of human resources management in principle. However, they consider that it would be premature and counter-productive to delegate such essential functions as "hire", "fire" and "promote" before the necessary conditions are created.

RECOMMENDATION 3. The decentralization and delegation of such essential human resources management functions as recruitment, promotion, and separation should be carried out only after:

(a) human resources management policies are formulated as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report A/C.5/49/5;

(b) all personnel procedures and methods are reviewed and improved, as required by General Assembly resolution 47/226;

(c) proper demarcation of responsibilities in the area of human resources management is established between OHRM and other offices and departments at and away from Headquarters; and

(d) appropriate mechanisms for reporting, accountability and follow-up are put in place.

During inspection of the application of United Nations recruitment policies, the Inspectors identified a number of deficiencies.

With regard to retention in service and employment beyond the age of retirement, the Inspectors observe that:

(a) although the increase in the number of reappointments made in the period 1990-1993 is due to the expansion of peace-keeping and related missions, the vast majority of reappointed staff have actually served in substantive departments;

(b) the age of a significant number of reappointed staff has been above 75 years; One person was successively reappointed at age 86, 87 and 88;

(c) 37 per cent of reappointments were granted to nationals of one Member State.

RECOMMENDATION 4. In order to meet staff needs and especially those of peace-keeping and related missions, as well as the needs of departments to replace the staff sent on missions, the Secretary-General should be allowed to extend contracts of staff on board up to the age of 62, provided that their experience is relevant and performance is satisfactory. This measure will allow the Secretary-General both to use in-house expertise more extensively and put on the same footing staff recruited before 1 January 1990, for whom the retirement age is fixed at 60, and staff recruited after that date whose retirement age is 62.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Although the principle of geographical distribution is not officially applicable to staff reappointed after retirement age, the Secretary-General should take every measure to ensure a certain geographical balance and national diversity of staff both sent on missions and those employed as replacements for the latter.

With regard to competitive examinations, the Inspectors note that these yield many more candidates than there are vacancies. As a result, a large number of successful candidates are never recruited although their names are retained on the reserve list for years. The Inspectors would like to report that, according to the information provided by OHRM, the average cost of recruitment of one official at P-2 level through competitive examinations varies between US$ 11,000 and US$ 16,000, that of a P-3 within the range US$ 9,000 to US$ 44,000. The cost of recruitment through recruitment missions has not been made available to the Inspectors.

The Inspectors would like to recall that, in its recent report on the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat[1], the Joint Inspection Unit recommended that the Secretary-General should continue the "comprehensive report" on personnel matters which the General Assembly has requested for 1994 as a biennial human resources report providing a systematic, integrated, transparent, and results-oriented assessment of

progress in managing human resources. However, the Secretary-General's 1994 report[2] fell far short of providing factual analysis of the status of recruitment issues and actions discussed in this JIU report.

RECOMMENDATION 6. In his efforts to enhance transparency, accountability and follow-up in personnel programme, the Secretary-General should provide in the proposed human resources report a full account of costs, benefits, problems and prospects related to all forms of recruitment activities (competitive examinations, recruitment missions, etc.).

RECOMMENDATION 7. The Secretariat should modernize recruitment methods both through diversification of recruitment sources which remain untapped (e.g., universities, professional organizations, etc.) and utilization of such means as electronic bulletin boards, professional journals and magazines with a view to ensuring recruitment of the best candidates. In this endeavour, the principle of equitable geographical distribution of staff should not be jeopardized.

The Inspectors acknowledge that, over the years, competitive examinations have enabled some talented young staff members to be recruited. However, programme managers who were interviewed informed the Inspectors that the general level of successful candidates was rather low. The Inspectors were made aware of the fact that the contracts of about 11 per cent of them are not renewed. In the Inspectors' view, there is a certain laxity in applying staff rule 104.12(a) concerning the probationary form of appointment. To a certain extent, granting probationary contracts also undermines the principle of competitivity among the staff.

RECOMMENDATION 8. Probationary contracts for staff recruited through competitive examinations should be abolished. Initial appointment for these staff should be fixed-term for a duration of two years. Amendments to the staff rules should be made accordingly.

The Inspectors found the quality of the rosters of internal and external candidates inadequate. Thus the data contained in the roster of internal candidates is not classified by relevant categories. This 150-page document is of extremely limited utility.

RECOMMENDATION 9. The format of rosters should be improved along lines specified in paras. 104-109 of the present report. The rosters and job designs should use the same descriptors to allow more expeditious and much better selection of both internal and external candidates.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations personnel management system has been a target of criticism for many years both outside and within the Organization. In March 1993, the outgoing Under-Secretary-General for DAM, in his report to the Secretary-General, qualified this system as deficient in nearly every aspect (recruitment, training, career development, etc.), and even considered it as "a major stumbling block to true reform within the Organization".

2. The severity of the current criticism levelled at the United Nations recruitment system can be easily explained. Being confronted with unprecedented challenges both in scope and complexity, the Organization more than ever before needs the staff who demonstrate the highest standards of competence and efficiency as envisaged in the Charter. Indeed, the staff of the United Nations are its most precious asset on which the success of the Organization's activities heavily depends.

3. As the United Nations becomes increasingly operational, the staff are called upon more often to set up major field operations, manage comprehensive programmes, often requiring specialized expertise. The statement attributed to one of the United Nations high officials to the effect that, for the Organization "The days of gifted amateurism are over", not only exactly describes where the demarcation line between its past and future lies, but also serves as a point of departure for reflection on what United Nations human resources management is today and what it should be tomorrow. To cope with the current and future challenges, the United Nations has no other option than to recruit professionally competent people at all levels and promote professionalism throughout the Secretariat.

4. The General Assembly, in its numerous resolutions, has stressed the importance of ensuring that personnel management is conducive to the recruitment and retention of staff of the highest quality. The International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit have made many recommendations in this regard. Progress, however, has been discouraging. In the face of persistent deficiencies in personnel management, the General Assembly, in its resolution A/47/226, urged the Secretary-General "to review and improve, where necessary, all personnel policies and procedures with a view to making them more simple, transparent and relevant to the new demands placed upon the Secretariat"[3].

5. Given the specificity of the United Nations, three prerequisites are essential for successful recruitment, namely: (a) political guidance by Member States for setting recruitment policy of the Organization; (b) modern processes and procedures to translate the Member States' policy into concrete actions; (c) competent and strong implementation mechanism with properly defined authority and responsibilities, including those in the area of reporting and accountability.

6. General Assembly resolutions on personnel questions, e.g., 33/143, 35/210 and 47/226 to name a few, provide sufficient political guidance for human resources management in the United Nations. The situation with the other prerequisites is quite different.

7. A consistent implementation policy is non-existent. The current processes and procedures are capable of ensuring neither recruitment of specialists of high calibre nor brevity of recruitment process. As qualified by ICSC in 1982, recruitment is still based on word of mouth rather than on objective selection criteria. Both inside and outside the

Organization, the present recruitment system is frequently described as anachronistic, rigid and cumbersome which discourages the hiring of qualified staff and as particularly difficult to recruit competent candidates for upper-level posts where the need for individuals with management and personnel skills is most critical.

8. Finally, the Office of Human Resources Management continues to function as an entity administering the staff rather than managing human resources. The new name (previously Office of Personnel Services), which OHRM received in 1986 following the recommendation of the Group of 18[4], did not bring any changes in its activities to adopt a human resources management concept. Moreover, two essential functions such as policy co-ordination and especially human resources planning, which is the very basis of human resources management, have been abolished in OHRM.

9. Inadequately defined mission, lack of professionalism and authority seriously affected OHRM, which, until recently, has been referred to by many United Nations officials as dysfunctional. Frequent replacements of the OHRM head (four in four years) as well as downgrading the post of the incumbent to D-2 level (restored again at the level of Assistant Secretary-General by the Secretary-General's decision of August 1994) contributed to eroding the authority of this Office. Interference in the recruitment and promotion process, even for lower level staff, by some Member States and Secretariat officials disrupts the work not only of the head of the OHRM but also of many of its staff.

10. Fortunately, encouraging signs of improvement in human resources management have appeared following the recent nominations of Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, both skilled and experienced managers. A new, professional approach to dealing with the relevant issues is, in particular, manifested by the Secretary-General's report on a human resources management strategy[5] and the statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to the Fifth Committee on 6 October, 1994.

11. A new Performance Appraisal System (PAS), which the Secretariat intends to implement is expected to be one of the most significant results of this approach. It will finally link individual staff performance to unit work plans and provide for a set of rewards and sanctions as a follow-up. In its recent report on a new performance appraisal system[6], JIU proposed fundamental prerequisites, key elements, constraints and adjustments, as well as management commitment for successful implementation of the new PAS.

12. The above-mentioned signs, however, did not affect the Inspectors' critical analysis of the current recruitment policies and practices, the aim of which was to find ways of implementing United Nations recruitment policies in the most efficient and effective manner. Therefore, the Inspectors believe that it would be rational to consider the present report in conjunction with the Secretary-General's reports on: (a) A strategy for the management of human resources of the Organization[7], (b) Composition of the Secretariat[8] and (c) Human resources management policies[9].

13. Pending the outcome of the ongoing Secretariat restructuring process and of the new recruitment policies as announced in the above documents, the Inspectors will continue to follow-up on the effectiveness of their implementation.

II. RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

A. Purposes and policies

(a) General

14. Recruitment is an important part of Human Resources Management. It may be defined as an activity aimed at obtaining appropriate human resources whose qualifications and skills match functions of the relevant posts. It is a dynamic and never-ending activity, involving not only the taking of certain basic decisions at certain times, but also continuous analysis of situations and prospects for the future, and constant adjustment of the system accordingly. It is an activity that involves anticipating and channelling the dynamics of an organization.

15. To be effective, this activity should be guided by a policy. Experience suggests that a policy should be basic and practicable, rather than too ambitious, so that it can respond effectively to the current situation. It is a requirement which cannot be ignored in the United Nations because of the great complexity of administrative machinery and the extraordinarily rapid rate of development of the needs the Organization has to meet.

16. The absence of a recruitment policy, or a defective policy, can be responsible for doing great damage: examples of this are failure to match needs with the administrative capacity to meet them; overloading personnel management units and, more importantly, negative effect on the functioning of substantive services.

(b) Purposes of recruitment

17. The general purpose of recruitment is to provide an organization with a pool of potentially qualified candidates. The specific purposes of recruitment are as follows:

- to determine the Organization's long-and short-term needs by job title and level in the Organization, which implies appropriate human resources planning and job analysis;
- to obtain a pool of qualified applicants at a minimum cost to the Organization;
- to help increase the success rate of selection process by reducing the number of obviously underqualified and overqualified applicants;
- to develop effective recruitment materials;
- to develop a systematic and integrated programme of recruitment in conjunction with other human resource activities and with the co-operation of programme managers;
- to increase organizational and individual effectiveness in the short- and long-term;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of various techniques and recruitment locations for all types of applicants.

(c) Status of policies

18. Obviously, to attain the above objectives it is essential to have relevant recruitment policies and also to ensure their effective implementation. Recruitment being the most frequently criticized component of United Nations personnel management, it is not unreasonable to raise once again the fundamental question of whether the United Nations has a recruitment policy. The answer is both "yes" and "no".

19. Article 101 of the United Nations Charter is clear. It stipulates that: "The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity". It also provides that "due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible". In addition to these well-known guiding principles for recruitment, the General Assembly established the criteria for calculating Member States' desirable ranges and recruitment procedures for posts subject to geographical distribution in the United Nations Secretariat. Other General Assembly directives for the Organization's recruitment policy included those concerning competitive examinations at P2 and P3 levels, circulation of vacancy announcement bulletins, recruitment of women, employment of spouses, secondment, interference of Member States and senior United Nations officials in the recruitment process, etc.

20. The General Assembly's most comprehensive resolution on personnel issues is undoubtedly resolution 35/210. It is pertinent to note that the "raison-d'être" for this resolution had been the concern of Member States over "the limited progress achieved in the establishment of a coherent personnel policy as well as in the implementation of the measures set out in the preceding resolutions"[10], most particularly in resolution 33/143. For the purpose of this report, it also needs to be mentioned that General Assembly resolution 35/210 called for an "integrated approach to the personnel management requirements of the Organization"[11] and requested the Secretary-General "to establish and pursue an active recruitment policy, in particular, in order to raise the levels of personnel recruited from unrepresented and under-represented countries and countries below the midpoint of the desirable ranges to the extent possible towards the midpoint"[12]. (Emphasis added).

21. In the Inspectors' view and that of some United Nations analysts[13], the Organization has no such a policy which is understood as a coherent set of activities and methods to attain the recruitment objectives formulated in Article 101.3 of the Charter. The Inspectors found that the latest document setting out both United Nations recruitment policies and procedures dates as far back as 3 February 1981 and was issued following the adoption of resolution 35/210. Since then until now only a few administrative instructions on recruitment were issued. The Inspectors strongly believe that a comprehensive document clearly spelling out the current recruitment policies and procedures is much needed which could be a part of a simplified and more "user friendly" personnel manual which has been promised for a long time.

B. Basic statistics

(a) Composition of the Secretariat

22. The total staff of the United Nations worldwide as at 30 June 1994 was 33,967. Of these, 7,363 were Professionals and above, 23,335 were General Service staff, and 3,269 were on limited project contracts. In comparison to 1993, the total United Nations staff have increased by 2,063, including 428 and 1443 in the Professional and General Service categories, respectively. The increase in project personnel has been 182.

23. Staff in posts subject to geographical distribution are internationally recruited personnel to professional posts financed against the regular budget less those with special language requirements as well as the staff indicated in paragraph 11 of the Secretary-General's report on composition of the Secretariat[14]. The total number of posts subject to geographical distribution was 2,550 or 7,5 per cent of all United Nations staff. As against 1993, there has been a decrease by 23 of such posts.

24. Composition of the Secretariat and geographical distribution of posts are items of extensive discussion in the General Assembly. At its forty-seventh session, which was the previous "personnel session", more than 30 delegations, some of them speaking on behalf of groups of countries, addressed this question.

TABLE 1

Number of countries by category with regard to geographical distribution (as at 30 June in the 1988-1994 period)

Countries	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Unrepresented	11	11	11	16	29	29	28
Under-represented	27	19	19	24	21	25	25
Within the range	103	109	110	104	104	104	111
Over-represented	18	20	19	24	24	25	20

25. The table above reproduces the evolution of the situation of groups of countries with regard to their geographical representation in the Secretariat. It showed that, in 1994, 20 countries were over-represented (those with nationals in posts subject to geographical distribution in excess of the upper limit of their respective desirable ranges). There are at least 4 Member States which are grossly over-represented. The number of unrepresented Member States as at 30 June 1994, was 28; 19 of these were States that had only recently been admitted to membership. The number of under-represented States was the same as a year earlier.

26. In the Inspectors' view, the geographical representation of Member States can be improved if the situation of grossly over-represented countries is taken into account in future recruitment plans.

27. The methodology of calculating "desirable ranges" of representation of Member States continues to be a contentious issue. It will be recalled that the current formula assigns a 40 per cent weight to membership, 55 per cent to contribution and 5 per cent to population. While discussion on methodology to calculate desirable ranges is continuing, the Inspectors believe that, for the purposes of the present report, it is more practical to consider how to ensure that the Secretariat can strengthen its recruitment policy to achieve equitable geographical distribution.

(b) Volume of recruitment

28. The United Nations recruits annually some 600 - 1000 individuals for established posts in the two categories (Professional and General Service posts). During the periods of freeze, the latest being introduced in 1986 and 1992, recruitment of Professional staff represented almost half that in regular years, while General Service staff was not normally affected.

TABLE 2

Recruitment of professional staff to geographical and non-geographical established posts in 1988 - 1994

YEAR	Geographical posts							Non-geographical posts						
	$P_{1/2}$	P_3	P_4	P_5	D_1	D_2	Total	$P_{1/2}$	P_3	P_4	P_5	D_1	D_2	Total
1988	30	22	24	11	12	2	101	4	4	5	1	0	0	14
1989	56	56	32	7	8	6	165	11	18	10	0	0	0	39
1990	79	42	34	8	10	6	179	9	13	6	1	2	0	31
1991	38	42	28	14	5	2	129	13	14	2	1	0	1	31
1992	39	17	13	6	2	2	79	12	14	4	1	0	0	31
1993	37	23	16	12	1	0	89	2	7	5	1	2	0	17
1994	10	11	7	2	1	2	33	3	3	0	0	0	0	6
Grand Total	289	213	154	60	39	20	775	54	73	32	5	4	1	169

Source: data provided by OHRM.

29. The table above shows the member staff in the Professional category recruited both to geographical and non-geographical established posts in the period 1988-1994. The figures for 1994 reflect recruitment up to the beginning of June. To obtain overall recruitment figures for the Organization, those recruited for General Service posts have to be added. The relevant numbers for the same period are given in the table below.

TABLE 3

Overall recruitment to established posts, 1988 - 1994

Year	P posts	GS posts	Total	Year	P posts	GS posts	Total
1988	115	481	596	1992	110	772	882
1989	204	776	980	1993	106	690	796
1990	210	465	675	1994*	39	124	163
1991	160	610	770				

*Note: Figures for 1994 reflect recruitment made in the first five months of the year.

30. It needs to be mentioned that the bulk (74.2 per cent) of those recruited, in the period of July 1993 to 30 June 1994, were nationals of within-range Member States, while recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States constituted 1.6 and 16.1 per cent, respectively.

(c) Recruitment during the periods of freeze

31. In February 1992, the Secretary-General decreed a temporary suspension of recruitment, which was lifted in June 1994 after repeated appeals by Member States, ACABQ and CPC to this effect. It was the second freeze in the last 8 years.

32. In 1986, the Secretary-General decided to suspend recruitment as part of his response to the financial difficulties of the Organization. A limited number of appointments were made after that date to fill essential posts to meet programme needs. Most of these

posts were of a specialized nature and in organizational units with high vacancy rates. Between 1 April 1986 and 31 March 1988, the total number of external candidates recruited for posts subject to geographical distribution was 199, representing about 100 recruitments a year, only a third of the average during the preceding years[15]. Following the freeze at the end of 1986, the Secretary-General established the vacancy management and staff redeployment programme, which was designed to redistribute the Organization's human resources in a rational, timely and efficient manner with a view to minimizing the impact on mandated programmes of vacancies resulting from the suspension of recruitment.

33. In early 1988, bearing in mind the need to implement recommendation 15 (as approved by the General Assembly) of the Group of 18 with respect to reduction of posts in the United Nations Secretariat, the Secretary-General decided to introduce a strictly controlled form of recruitment for vacant posts for which qualified internal candidates could be identified through the vacancy management system. Certain flexibility in recruitment, however, was exercised with regard to departments and offices with high vacancy rates, in particular the secretariats of regional commissions.

34. The latest suspension, which concerned only external recruitment for posts in the Professional category (with regard to General Service posts and related categories maximum restraint was decreed), was explained by the necessity to reform the organizational structure of the Secretariat[16]. The suspension was not absolute and exceptions, though limited to an absolute minimum, were allowed. The suspension did not apply to temporary recruitment for service on mission or for replacements assigned to mission duties, or to temporary assistance appointments for conference or meetings.

35. During the 18-month period to June 1994, there were 194 appointments to posts subject to geographical distribution as exceptions to or exemptions from the 1992 recruitment freeze; 36 of those appointed had been successful candidates in national competitive examinations for posts at P-1 and P-2 levels. In addition, 52 candidates were appointed to language posts and other posts not subject to geographical distribution. Thus, the number of appointments made during the above period represented more than half of the regular recruitment to professional posts.

36. The grade structure of recruitment in those 18 months was as follows:

D-2 - 4; D-1 - 6; P-5 - 20; P-4 - 44; P-3 - 70; P-2 - 101.

As mentioned in paragraph 28 above, recruitment to General Service posts was not affected by the freeze.

37. The analysis of these appointments by organizational unit suggests that the largest number of appointments was made in DAM (41), followed in descending order by:

DDSMS - 13; ECE - 12; DPI - 12; UNCTAD - 11; UNDCP - 9.

38. The vacancy rate of Professional posts in these departments and offices as of March 1994 were as follows:

DAM - 3.9 per cent; DDSMS - 2.9 per cent; ECE - 5.2 per cent;
UNDCP - 7.0 per cent; DPI - 4.3 per cent; UNCTAD - 5.4 per cent.

However, as follows from Annex I, higher vacancy rates are characteristic to the following organizational units:

DHA - 31.0 per cent; **HABITAT** - 27.1 per cent; **ESCWA** - 19.4 per cent; **CHR** - 19.0 per cent; **OLA** - 13.3 per cent; **OIOS** - 12.5 per cent; **UNEP** - 11.4 per cent; **ESCAP** - 10.9 per cent, and jointly financed units 10.3 per cent.

TABLE 4

Recruitment during the 1992-1994 freeze, by category of countries and level of posts

Country category	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2	Total
Unrepresented	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Under-represented	1	1	0	3	13	40	58
Within the range	2	4	18	36	48	54	162
Over-represented	1	0	2	5	3	0	11
Total recruitment	4	5	20	44	64	102	239

39. The table above suggests that during the 1992-1994 freeze period 239 appointments were made to posts subject to geographical distribution. This implies that exceptions to the suspension of recruitment constituted about two-thirds of what would have been the regular recruitment if there were no freeze. In other words, exceptions to recruitment suspension were rather a rule than an exception.

40. From the point of view of geographical distribution, the bulk of recruitment (68 per cent) was composed of nationals of the countries within the range. Recruitment from under-represented countries was about 24 per cent of the total, while that from unrepresented countries only 3 per cent (8 posts), and from over-represented countries about 5 per cent.

41. At the thirty-second session of CPC, a number of delegations stressed their expectation that the Secretary-General's decision to suspend external recruitment would be reversed as soon as possible so as to permit the inflow of younger people and additional talent, as well as to rectify existing inequalities in the geographical distribution of posts that the "freeze" tended to petrify[17].

42. Both suspensions were criticized by some Member States. In resolution 42/220 A, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to keep under review the freeze on the recruitment of external candidates with a view to lifting the freeze at the earliest possible date and to report to the General Assembly on a possible alternative to the policy of suspending such recruitment.

43. At the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, those delegations who criticized the recruitment freeze pointed out that it had adversely affected equitable geographical distribution. In its resolution 47/226, the General Assembly expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would end the temporary suspension of recruitment as soon as possible[18].

(d) Professional profile of recruited candidates

TABLE 5

Recruitment and placement to posts subject to geographical distribution by occupation group: June 1988 - June 1994 (all occupation groups)

OCC */	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	TOTAL
ADM	14	23	37	28	17	21	11	151
ECO	20	43	58	41	18	14	10	204
EDP	4	8	9	10	3	8	1	43
ENG	6	7	8	5	4	2	3	35
FIN	3	6	12	6	7	9	1	44
LAN	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
LEG	9	14	6	2	6	8	1	46
LIB	6	6	2	4	2	1	1	22
POL	16	18	4	10	3	6	1	58
INF	2	19	12	9	4	8	3	57
PUB	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
SCI	7	1	7	2	3	3	0	23
SOC	10	12	8	12	8	6	0	56
STA	4	9	15	2	4	4	1	39
TOTALS	103	169	179	131	79	90	33	784

*/ Note: the names of the United Nations occupation groups are given in Annex II.

Source: data provided by OHRM.

44. Table 5 above reflects recruitment to geographical posts belonging to all fourteen United Nations occupational groups. The table suggests that more than 45 per cent of the entire recruitment fell within two occupational groups: economists (26 per cent) and specialists in administration (19.3 per cent), followed by specialists in information, political and social science who were recruited in almost equal numbers (about 7 per cent for each group of the total recruitment). Further in descending order of magnitude have been specialists in legal affairs, finance, electronic data processing and statistics.

(e) Sources of recruitment

45. The Inspectors also endeavoured to determine the relative importance of different recruitment sources divided into major categories such as Member States, United Nations system organizations, multilateral intergovernmental institutions outside the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. It would also have been of interest to know how many among these recruited came from private and public sectors, or from diplomatic missions, for example. Unfortunately, this information cannot be reported since no record is kept in OHRM regarding the origin of the candidates.

C. Retention in service and employment beyond the age of retirement

(a) Extensions over the retirement age

46. Staff regulation 9.5 fixes the age or retirement of Secretariat staff at 60 years. The regulation, however, authorizes the Secretary-General to retain staff beyond that age in exceptional cases when it is in the interest of the Organization to do so. The Secretary-General personally decides on the application of the provisions regarding the age of retirement of staff at Assistant Secretary-General level and above.

47. The General Assembly, by its resolution 33/143, requested the Secretary-General to apply the regulations regarding the age of retirement and not to grant extensions beyond the established age of retirement except for the minimum time required to find a suitable replacement, normally for no more than six months after that age. In its resolution 35/210, the Assembly reaffirmed the need to apply the regulations regarding the age of retirement and not to grant exceptions beyond six months after the established age of retirement.

48. Accordingly, the Secretary-General, in his latest administrative instruction on the issue[19], decreed that, when extensions beyond retirement age are warranted, they will be approved solely for the purpose of allowing the minimum time required for replacement action. More flexible criteria were allowed to be applied to:

(a) language staff in posts which are not subject to geographical distribution and staff in the General Service and related categories with special technical skills; and

(b) locally recruited General Service staff who were already in the service of the Organization prior to December 1978 and who at the age of 60 will have less than 20 years' contributory service in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

This administrative instruction also provides that in applying the above flexibility, due consideration should be given to performance records and individual circumstances, which may involve pension and insurance coverage of the staff member in question as well as the implications for the career development of other staff.

49. The analysis of the relevant data submitted by OHRM suggests that, over the period 1990-1993, extensions were granted to 227 staff members (all categories), including 152 who were extended for up to 6 months, and 75 for 6-12 months. There were also cases of extensions for more than 12 months. Despite JIU request, the data on those has not been provided.

50. Among those who were extended for 6-12 months are 26 Professional staff (1 USG, 2 D-2, 8 D-1, 9 P-5, 3 P-4 and 3 P-3), 1 L, 1 N, 32 GS, 4 F and FL, 5 TC, 1 E, 1 I, 2 R and 2 T staff. And it was Conference Services and the Department of Administration and Management that granted most of extensions to the Professional staff for more than 6 months.

(b) Employment after age 60

51. There is no particular staff regulation governing reappointment after retirement age The above-mentioned administrative instruction[20] provides that the staff will not normally

be appointed above the age of 60. However, it allows reappointment of staff above that age on a short- or fixed-term basis, if no other suitable candidate is available:

(a) for service specifically with a United Nations mission, under the 100 series of Staff Rules, or

(b) for service as technical assistance project personnel, under the 200 series of Staff Rules, or

(c) for conference and other short-term service under the 300 series of Staff Rules, provided that the period or periods of service under such an appointment do not exceed six months in any one period of 12 consecutive months.

It also provides that no former staff member shall be so appointed within three months of retirement at or after the age of 60.

TABLE 6

Reappointments in professional category and above in 1990 - 1994, by year and level

	1990	1991	1992	1993
Total number of reappointments	74	98	121	84
Number of reappointed staff, including	56	66	90	70
USG	1	1	3	2
ASG	-	1	1	1
D-2	2	4	4	2
D-1	-	2	4	4
P-5	6	8	14	14
P-4	25	31	35	26
P-3	20	14	23	16
P-2	2	5	6	5

52. As follows from the table above, there has been a substantial number of reappointments in the 1990-1993 period. However, the number of reappointments and reappointed staff do not match. This is because of the fact that some staff were reappointed several times over the years and within a given year. The vast majority of reappointed staff have actually served in substantive departments. The number of those sent on missions, according to the information provided by OHRM, was in 1990 - 3, in 1991 - 4, in 1992 - 24 and in 1993 - 23.

TABLE 7

Reappointments in professional category and above in 1990 - 1994, by year and age

Age of reappointed staff	1990	1991	1992	1993
Up to 62	16	22	31	23
63 - 64	11	11	16	13
65 - 69	18	18	29	24
70 - 74	7	12	10	5
75 - 79	3	2	4	4
80 - 85	1	-	-	-
above 85	-	1	1	1

53. The table above suggests that the largest number of reappointments in 1990-1993 occurred within two suggested age groups: (a) up to 62 - 92 reappointments or 31.5 per cent of the total, (b) and between 65 and 69 years - 89 reappointments or 30.5 per cent. The number of reappointed staff in 75-79 and 80-85 age groups is not negligible - 34 and 13 reappointments, respectively. There was only 1 reappointment for the age group 80-85. One person had been successively reappointed at the age of 86, 87 and 88. Thus, 88 is the absolute age record for reappointment of a former staff member.

54. In its report on staffing of the civilian component of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions[21], the Joint Inspection Unit, given the great and sudden demand in personnel for peace-keeping operations and the lack of candidates familiar with the United Nations activities, as well as brevity of assignments, favoured more extensive use of former United Nations staff, particularly those with specialized knowledge of administration and financial policies and procedures. The Inspectors also recommended, however, that special attention should be paid to the physical condition of retirees before their assignment to missions.

55. Another point which can be made is related to nationality of reappointed staff. The analysis of reappointments made in 1990-1994 suggests that out of the total of 377 reappointments, 275 were granted to nationals of developed countries and 139 (37 per cent) to nationals of one Member State. While the principle of geographical distribution to this category of staff is not officially applicable, a certain geographical balance or national diversity should, however, be maintained. As mentioned by some Member States in the course of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, all recruitment and not simply the posts subject to geographical distribution, which as shown in paragraph 25 above represents only 7.5 per cent of all United Nations staff, should be fully representative of the diversity of experience which is available today throughout the world.

56. The forty-ninth session of the General Assembly expressed its concern about the potential adverse effects of the use of retirees on recruitment and promotion in the Secretariat. It also requested the Secretary-General in this regard to submit detailed information to the General Assembly at its resumed forty-ninth session on the practice of the use of retirees in the United Nations Secretariat, including information on their effectiveness, number, nationality, gender, fields of work, remuneration, duration of contracts and the reasons for their employment. The above data together with the information to be submitted by the Secretary-General will hopefully provide a much more comprehensive and transparent picture of recruitment and use of retirees.

/...

III. METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

A. General observations

57. Despite all the deficiencies of the United Nations recruitment system, it needs to be recognized that a number of positive changes have been introduced over the last several years. These include:

(i) recruitment by occupational groups;

(ii) recruitment at P-1 and P-2 levels exclusively through competitive examinations;

(iii) introduction of competitive examinations for P-3 level posts;

(iv) setting-up of a Senior Review Group to consider candidates for D-2 posts.

58. In addition to the above improvements, there had been some progress in complying with the request of Member States, formulated in a number of General Assembly resolutions, including 35/210, to the effect that no posts, offices, or divisions should be considered as the domain of particular Member States or groups of Member States. However, in its resolution 47/226, the General Assembly reaffirmed that "no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any State or group of States"[22]. The Inspectors observe that these resolutions have not yet been fully implemented. They found that, despite the above resolutions, the practice of replacing senior level positions with nationals of the same country remains in effect in many cases.

59. Finally, a new system of "secondment" has been established. The Assembly, at its forty-seventh session, amended the Staff Regulations to make provision for the appointment of staff on secondment from government service. It decided that secondment should be based on a tripartite agreement involving the Organization, the government, and the staff member concerned, and that extension of secondment would require the agreement of all three parties.[23]

60. There are effectively two formal recruitment procedures for United Nations professional staff. One - competitive examinations - which is widely used for junior staff, and the other, for employees entering at the P-3 level and above, is ordinary or regular recruitment.

B. Competitive examinations

61. The system in place for junior staff (P-1 and P-2 grades) utilizes internal and external competitive examinations for all language posts or posts subject to geographical distribution, which are the majority of career-path positions.

62. General Assembly resolution 33/143 of 20 December 1978 provided that up to 30 per cent of the total posts available for appointment at the P-1 and P-2 levels should be made available for movement of staff from the General Service to the Professional category and that such recruitment should be conducted exclusively through competitive methods of selection from General Service staff with at least five years' experience. The resolution also recommended, in consultation with the governments concerned, the use of competitive examinations for the remaining P-1/P-2 vacancies. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 38/210 of 17 December 1980, decided that recruitment to grades P-1 and P-2 would, as a general rule, be based on competitive

examinations. It should be added that recruitment to P-2 posts accounted for a little over a third of total annual recruitment in all professional grades.

(a) Internal (G-to-P) examinations

63. Internal examinations have been held each year since 1980 in one or more of the 11 occupational groups of the United Nations. These standardized written tests, which contain analytical and essay sections as well as sections specific to the occupational group's skills, are the only avenue through which individuals in the General Service category of the United Nations can advance to the professional service.

TABLE 8

Internal (G to P) examinations

Year	Total No. applications	The number of candidates				Estimated cost (US$)
		Convoked to the written examination	Sat for the written examination	Convoked to the oral examination	Recommended for placement and placed	
1990	452	441	316	52	20	242,460
1991	384	366	272	41	15	267,285
1992	375	327	265	44	18	280,672
1993	341	314	288	38	18	297,071
Total	1,552	1,448	1,141	175	71	1,087,488

Source: data provided by OHRM.

64. Actually, as required by resolution 33/143, 30 per cent of the P-2 posts vacant annually are allocated for the G to P examination while the 70 per cent balance of P-2 vacancies is allocated for the successful candidates in the national competitive recruitment examinations. On average, about 20 vacancies were made available annually for transition from category G to category P. Over the period under review these targets have been closely adhered to. The table above also provides the data on the estimated cost of holding internal competitive examinations. The average cost of placing a former GS staff member on a professional post amounts to about US$ 15.3 thousand.

65. Since they were instituted in 1979, the internal examinations for G to P promotion have generally raised the quality of employees entering professional grades through internal promotion. In view of some Member States, G to P examinations can be seen not only as a means of promotion but also as part of recruitment. Therefore they hold that the principles and policies of the Organization in the area of recruitment - such as certain educational requirements, due regard to equitable geographical distribution and gender balance- should be adhered to as well.

66. In this connection, OHRM observes that any limitation on the participation of staff in the General Service and related categories in the G to P examination process on the basis of nationality or gender would constitute discrimination and run contrary to the Staff Regulations and Rules. The G to P examinations proved to be a major contributor in the effort to achieve gender balance in the Secretariat, since 63 per cent of the candidates promoted through the G to P examination since 1979 have been women.

(b) External examinations

67. As for the external examinations, they had become the rule by 1985, which means that non-competitive recruitment to P-1/P-2 posts subject to geographical distribution was practically ended. External examinations, also conducted annually and by occupational group, are held in countries whose nationals are under-represented in the Secretariat. Like the internal G to P tests, the national competitive examinations have generally improved the calibre of professionals entering the United Nations since their institution in 1981. Moreover, they brought some talented youth to the Organization. They have also been an effective means of increasing the percentage of new employees from countries with traditionally low levels of representation on the staff.

68. The success of the external examinations in identifying candidates for recruitment indicated that they might be equally useful in the recruitment of candidates at higher levels. Following the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit, the General Assembly, at its forty-third session, requested the Secretary-General to introduce competitive examinations for candidates to P-3 posts.

69. Table 9 below contains the basic data on external examinations for the Professional category of staff, including the number of those who applied, were convoked and actually sat for the examinations. It suggests a low success rate especially at P-3 level. The table also shows a significant discrepancy between the number of those who were recommended and actually recruited. This situation may be partially explained by a slow process of recruitment. As a result, pending recruitment, some successful candidates secured employment elsewhere.

TABLE 9

External examinations for professionals (excluding language examinations)

Exam Year	Type of Exam.	No. of countries	The number of candidates					Estimated Cost US$
			Applied	Convoked to Written Exam.	Sat for the exam.	Recommended for recruitment	Actually recruited	
1990	National-P2	9	1,561	969	529	96	38	471,830
1991	National-P3	4	389	145	92	15	7	77,908
1991	National-P2	12	1,237	663	394	58	37	441,477
1992	National-P3	5	374	197	151	39	9	84,201
1992	National-P2	11	1,499	759	483	82	43	477,142
1993	National-P3	8	553	134	106	37	2	88,386
1993	National-P2	18	2,072	898	553	92	32	500,856
1994	National-P2	14	1,380	636	445	ORAL EXAM. UNDERWAY		465,473
1994	National-P3	3	190	69	56			82,143
TOT.		84	9,255	4,470	2,809	419	168	2,689,416

Source: data provided by OHRM.

70. The first national competitive examinations at the P-3 level were held in 1991 in four Member States: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy and Japan. Two occupational groups

were selected on the basis of prospective vacancies in these groups, administration and economics. In 1992, P-3 examinations were held in five Member States: Finland, Germany, Japan, Russia and United States of America in the occupational groups of economics, social affairs and statistics. Within the group of social affairs an examination was also held in demography. In 1994, P-3 examinations were held in Germany, Gabon and Japan in the occupational groups of economics, social affairs and statistics. In 1995, P-3 examinations are planned to be held in Japan, Republic of Korea, Norway, Poland, Romania and Ukraine in the occupational groups of administration, economics, political affairs and statistics. The Inspectors hope that more examinations will be held in developing countries and in the new Member States. The Inspectors also believe that the regional competitive examinations may, in some cases, prove to be more cost-effective than national examinations.

(c) Recruitment through language examinations

71. In addition to the above, recruitment of staff requiring special linguistic qualifications is carried out through national languages examinations. These, different in nature, organization and cost from examinations held for other categories of Professionals, are announced in those Member States where the language of examination is the principal language.

TABLE 10

Recruitment of staff through language examinations

Year	Total No. applications	Convoked to the written examinations	Sat for examinations	Recommended for placement	Placed	Estimated cost US$
1990	1,573	1,246	972	70	34	146,260
1991	3,800	2,448	2,122	88	33	166,630
1992	1,339	426	384	18	4	165,136
1993	1,675	1,392	1,045	61	19	174,535
Total	8,387	5,512	4,523	237	90	652,561

Source: data provided by ONUV.

72. During a normal year, the number of language staff recruited is estimated to be between 80 and 90. The freeze on recruitment which was initiated on 1 March 1992 was extended to all posts requiring special language competence. These included interpreters, editors, proofreaders, translators and verbatim reporters in all six official languages, plus German. As a result, the number of competitive examinations for language posts was reduced and long term recruitment nearly stopped. Only examinations for candidates who were staff members were requested during this period. Examinations initiated before the freeze were completed on a low priority basis. Because of the freeze and as a saving measure, the Secretariat has been using more free-lancers as interpreters, translators and other language staff. This has affected the quality of the conference services in respective areas.

* * *

73. By way of concluding this section, it may be noted that there seems to be a consensus for maintaining the competitive examination system. It seems to give relative satisfaction, including the capacity of many successful candidates to fit rapidly and

efficiently in the various services to which they are assigned. When first introduced, the competitive examinations were considered as a great step forward towards improvement of United Nations recruitment practices. Lately, however, some criticism by Member States may be discerned.

74. The first category of critical remarks refer to the cost effectiveness of these examinations. Indeed, do the actual number of posts which remain available for successful candidates justify the expenses incurred in using the national competitive examination process to recruit at the P-3 level? Table 8 suggests that in 1991, 92 candidates took the examinations and out of these only 7 were offered positions, or 7.6 per cent of the candidates. In 1992, out of a total of 151 candidates 9 were recruited (6.0 per cent). In 1993, the relevant figures were 106 and 2 (1.9 per cent). The ratio between those who took examinations and those who were recruited at P-2 level was: in 1990 - 7.2 per cent, in 1991 - 9.4 per cent, 1992 - 8.9 per cent and in 1993 - 5.8 per cent.

75. Table 9 also allows to determine the proportion of recruited candidates against those who were recommended. The relevant figures for P-2 level post candidates were: in 1990 - 39.6 per cent, in 1991 - 63.8 per cent, in 1992 - 52.4 per cent and in 1993 - 33.3 per cent. For P-3 post candidates the relevant figures, apart from that for 1991 (46.6 per cent), were significantly lower, namely: 1992 - 23.1 per cent, and 1993 - only 5.4 per cent.

76. The examinations, indeed, may well yield more candidates than there are vacancies and the list of recommended candidates is thus a reserve list which goes beyond the number of posts committed to each examination. However, OHRM recognizes that the past reserve lists have been too liberal. OHRM intends, therefore, to limit their validity to one year.

77. Tables 9 and 10 above reveal that the average cost of recruitment of one official at P-2 - P-3 level amounts to some US$ 16,000; that of a P-2 official, depending on the year, varies between US$ 11,000 and US$ 16,000, the corresponding figures for a P-3 official are within the range of US$ 9,000 and US$ 44,000. Recruitment of language personnel, on the average, is less costly - some US$ 6,000 per staff member. However, the cost range here is also important: US$ 4,300 - 41,300.

78. Without prejudice to the statement that as a result of the competitive examinations over the years some talented young staff members had been recruited, the general level of candidates is rather low. As follows from table 8 above, the vast majority of candidates do not pass the competitive examinations.

79. Moreover, there are complaints from programme managers that the performance of many staff recruited through competitive examinations is inadequate. The Inspectors were informed that the contracts of about 11 per cent of those are not renewed. It appears, however, that the number of some of those whose contracts they would wish not to extend is much higher.

80. In the Inspectors' view there is a certain laxity in applying staff rule 104.12(a), concerning the probationary form of appointment, despite the fact that it provides for separation. The reason is that this rule creates greater expectancy for this category of staff members since it mentions that they "are recruited for career service". Therefore, some programme managers act as if conversion from probationary into permanent appointment were automatic.

81. Other critical remarks are related to the quality and procedures of the competitive examinations themselves. Firstly, there seem to be no objective criteria for selection of candidates which would allow to select the best talents available in the countries where examinations are held. In the course of their analysis of some of the files, the Inspectors could not understand why some of the successful candidates with relevant academic background were only "recommended", and some others with inadequate academic background to the post were "highly" recommended. Secondly, interviews held within the framework of competitive examinations focus much more on personal attributes than on job-related issues. This hampers determining the degree of competence of the candidate.

82. An interview may be described as a conversation with a purpose. It is a conversation because the candidate should be drawn out to talk frankly with the interviewer about him - or herself and career. But the conversation has to be planned, directed, and controlled to achieve the main purpose of the interview, which is to make an accurate prediction of the candidate's future performance in the job for which he or she is being considered,[24] as well as to identify how their professional perspective is related to the functions they are expected to carry out. Therefore, assessment criteria commonly used in interviews held outside the United Nations, include not only "personality characteristics" and "overall impression", but above all "qualifications and training", "experience", and "knowledge and skills".

83. Concurrently with criticism, some Member States suggest that, whilst not abandoning the use of national competitive examinations, the number of such examinations should be limited. In their view, a less costly means of identifying qualified candidates for entry-level and mid-level positions would be the use of recruitment missions where structured interviews would be held and representatives from OHRM as well as the substantive office would be present.

C. Recruitment missions

84. Another modality of recruitment is recruitment missions to unrepresented and under-represented Member States. During the period under review, 8 such missions were undertaken: 2 in 1989 (Japan, Mongolia); 2 in 1990 (Albania, Soviet Union) and 3 in 1991 (Papua-New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu). Owing to the retrenchment exercise and the restructuring of various departments followed by the freeze on recruitment (1992-1994), no other missions were undertaken. As recruitment missions are sometimes referred to as an alternative to competitive examinations, the question of their cost-effectiveness inevitably arises. The Inspectors requested OHRM to provide information on the cost of recruitment missions organized in 1989 and 1991 as well as on the number of reviewed, recommended and recruited candidates. Unfortunately, this request has not been met.

D. Regular recruitment procedures for P-3 level and above

85. At the middle and senior levels --P-3, P-4, P-5 and D-1-- a lengthy, formal set of procedures for recruitment is in place: a job description is prepared by the department where the opening occurs; a vacancy announcement is produced and circulated by OHRM, which also selects candidates from its internal and external rosters who fit the job description, screens the names, and forwards them to the department. The department then interviews, evaluates, and selects a candidate from among these names as well as those submitted by the United Nations agencies and the governments of member countries. If the candidate is from the outside, the department's selection is reviewed by one of the selection bodies, whose recommendation is submitted for final decision by the Secretary-General. The Appointment and Promotion Board is the reviewing body for

candidates at the P-5 and D-1 level; the Appointment and Promotion Committees conduct the review of candidates at the P-3 and P-4 level. Despite the existence of these procedures, in many cases, especially in attractive duty stations, vacancy advertising becomes a formality since the names of future incumbents are known well in advance.

E. Recruitment for D-2 level

86. In 1991, following consultations on the manner in which vacancies at the Director (D-2) level should be filled, the Secretary-General established a Senior Review Group to advise him on the filling of these posts. This measure was intended to serve a threefold purpose: (a) to provide the Secretary-General with more structured advice in the consideration of candidates; (b) to ensure consistent implementation of personnel policies and recruitment guidelines; and (c) to satisfy members aspiring to such posts that their candidacies are given adequate consideration.

87. The Senior Review Group which is appointed by the Secretary-General consists of four officials at the Under- or Assistant Secretary-General level. One is the Chairperson of the Appointment and Promotion Board, another represents the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, a third is appointed in consultation with the staff, and the fourth is the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ex-officio).

(a) Procedures

88. The Secretary-General's administrative instruction on procedures of the Senior Review Group[25] provides that, in principle, prior to the submission of any recommendation for an appointment or promotion to the D-2 level, the head of the department or office concerned will request the Office of Human Resources Management to circulate a vacancy announcement for the post. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the head of the department or office concerned, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, may decide to advertise the vacancy internally only, or internally and externally. In exceptional circumstances, however, the Senior Review Group may decide not to advertise a post. After initial screening by the Office of Human Resources Management to establish basic eligibility, applications received by that Office will be forwarded to the head of the department or office concerned for evaluation.

89. After reviewing the applications, the head of the department or office will forward a recommendation to the Director of Personnel, who will present it to the Senior Review Group. It is the responsibility of the Group to ensure that all qualified candidates are given due consideration.

90. If a vacancy announcement has initially been circulated internally only and the Group concludes that there is no internal candidate fully qualified for the post, it may recommend that the post be advertised externally.

91. After deliberation, the Senior Review Group prepares a short list of all fully qualified candidates in ranking order and submits it to the Secretary-General for a final decision. Should the names put forward by the Review Group not include the candidate recommended by the department or office concerned, the recommendations of the Group, together with the views of the head of the department or office, are forwarded to the Secretary-General for a decision.

92. It should be noted that this procedure in no way detracts from the discretion of the Secretary-General as regards appointment to posts at the D-2 level. At his discretion, the Secretary-General may request the Group to review candidatures for senior management positions at levels higher than D-2.

(b) Activities

93. The information provided by OHRM on the activities of the Senior Review Group from March 1992 to the end of May 1994 suggests that the Group considered 157 candidates, including 30 external, for 36 D-2 posts and 1 ASG post. Sixteen of the candidates were already at D-2 level and one candidate for the post of Assistant Secretary-General was already at that level.

94. As a result, 30 appointments were made. As to the other 6 posts, either consideration of candidates was deferred or vacancy announcements were re-circulated. It also needs to be mentioned that for 8 posts only one candidature each was submitted. Seven of these posts have been filled.

IV. DEFICIENCIES AND IRREGULARITIES OF RECRUITMENT

95. The following illustrate the shortcomings of the United Nations recruitment system:

(a) the absence of objective, uniform criteria guiding recruitment;

(b) absence of planning;

(c) obsolete methods of recruitment;

(d) long delays in recruitment;

(e) so-called "regularization".

(f) absence of spouse recruitment programme

96. The above deficiencies have sometimes been associated with the lack of clarity about the mission of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and up to recent nominations of the heads of DAM and OHRM too little disposition on the part of the United Nations top leadership to ensure that OHRM's function is clarified and fulfilled.

97. Inadequate recruitment procedures have resulted in a number of staff not being sufficiently qualified either for the positions they hold or their grade levels, especially in management positions. Many United Nations officials holding these positions have had neither previous experience as managers nor specific management training. The result is badly conceived work assignments, low performance of the respective units and frustration over poor supervision. There has also been a tendency for political considerations and as part of favouritism to exert a strong influence on recruitment at the level of P-3 and above.

98. Neither the United Nations Charter nor Staff Regulations and Staff Rules make reference to any methodological framework for recruitment, advancement, career development or training. These texts contain nothing more than indications on the various types of contract and conditions of pay. This leaves great scope for arbitrariness in regard to career development and recruitment opportunities.

99. With regard to recruitment, the general practice has, in fact, been to identify posts available for candidates known in advance instead of seeking to attract large fields of candidates qualified to fill vacant posts. Clearly, the latter method ought to be the rule. OHRM agrees with this observation and anticipates improvements in this area through an enhanced OHRM planning capacity and the implementation of the human resources strategy elements pertaining to recruitment.

A. Lack of objective criteria

100. In reality, recruitment varies greatly, depending upon the manager whose section or unit is hiring a new officer and often bears little resemblance to the seemingly open and rigorous process described above. This is because the formal system is flawed in such fundamental respects that there is a general tendency to circumvent it through the use of ad hoc measures, which often rely heavily on personal contacts[26].

101. The most serious of these flaws is the fact that the United Nations has no common, objective, job-specific standards to guide recruitment at the P-3/P-4 level or the more

managerial P-5/D-1 level. The existing "Standards of recruitment and grading for the professional and higher categories" applied by OHRM are essentially standards for grading candidates on the basis of educational background and work experience. The purpose is to determine whether the minimum requirements are being met in this respect.

102. The objective of specific job criteria which the Inspectors have in mind is to enable OHRM to perform the fundamental task of recruitment, namely to assess the ability of the candidates to fulfil the functions of the post. This is not the same as determining the appropriate grade of a candidate. The grade depends on the level of responsibilities and the nature of functions but not vice versa.

103. Since job specific criteria are non-existent, the Organization inevitably relies upon haphazard, subjective, highly personalized processes. The absence of such standards as well as the lack of qualified staff in OHRM have helped create a situation in which OHRM makes only a desultory and superficial contribution to the recruitment process.

(a) Rosters

104. OHRM's rosters of individuals seeking recruitment or internal advancement should have been of great help in selecting appropriate candidates and ensuring objectivity of selection.

105. It will be recalled that resolution 35/210, among other things, provided that all applications received from candidates meeting the minimum standards established by the OPS (OHRM's predecessor) for posts and occupations be put into the roster of external candidates. The resolution also required it to be modernized rapidly and rendered operable and efficient; at the same time, a roster of internal candidates was to be developed and organized to be used in accordance with Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

106. Work on the roster was begun without a clear predetermined method. The register at first recorded all candidatures and was used above all to recruit technical co-operation experts. Later, it gradually became clear that other techniques needed to be mastered, e.g., classification of candidates by occupations, so that posts of a given type and potential candidates could be matched with each other, and the list to be kept permanently up to date so that it contained only candidates who were genuinely interested and available[27].

107. In the course of their enquiry, the Inspectors were informed that while the roster of external candidates was being regularly renewed and updated, that of internal candidates was not, and that work on the latter began in 1991 and was discontinued in 1992 under the pretext of insufficient resources made available to OHRM. The Inspectors observe however that some data for 1993 was put into the roster.

108. With regard to the quality of the roster of internal candidates, the Inspectors observe that the data as maintained is not classified by educational background, work experience, occupational skills, or other relevant categories. It represents nothing more than a list of staff with basic indicators (index number, grade, age, sex, nationality, functional title), it contains no qualitative information. This bulky document of 150 pages is thus of extremely limited utility and tends to be regarded as a "dead list" that is rarely considered in candidate selection.

109. In the face of the Secretariat's inability to build a properly balanced roster, coupled with established staff from the older Member States, concern grew among new members that equitable participation of their nationals in the Secretariat would be difficult to attain.

Many of their governments, therefore, added their pressure to those long exerted by some other members[28].

(b) Vacancy announcements and job descriptions

110. Inadequate rosters of candidates combined with poor personnel leadership had created the situation whereby the department heads, in effect, were doing their own recruitment. One of the frequent means has been tailoring of vacancy announcements. Control over the accuracy of vacancy announcements being inadequate, programme managers are tempted to adjust vacancy announcements to qualifications of their favourite (preferred) candidates, often making these candidates unique or advantaged over other candidates. Tailored vacancy announcements often have very little resemblance to relevant job descriptions. On many occasions, essential requirements were missing in order to adapt the vacancy announcement to a particular candidate. The Inspectors consider that OHRM bears responsibility not only for producing vacancy announcements in a timely manner but also for ensuring that vacancy announcements are made in accordance with certified job descriptions.

111. Tailoring of vacancy announcements can be partially explained by the fact that job descriptions, despite changes in job content, remain without modifications for decades and as such often found inaccurate, outdated, overlapping or redundant. Therefore, a systematic analysis of job descriptions is needed which will determine the content of jobs and the organizational responsibilities attached to them. Job description and classification should take into account changing demands, changing technologies and working methods, and reflect the requirements of the Organization rather than the skills of any staff member. They should be dynamic. It is also important to note that job descriptions are meant to be used as a tool for recruitment, orientation and training, developing performance standards, evaluating performance, and creating career development ladders.

112. The biggest danger to be avoided is that of overstating the qualifications required. Perhaps it is natural to go for the best, but setting unrealistically high level for candidates increases the problem of attracting applicants and results in di-satisfaction among recruits when they find that their talents are not being used. Understating requirements can, of course, be equally dangerous.[29] Therefore, qualifications indicated in job descriptions should be derived from a careful and objective analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to carry out the job.

113. In the Inspectors' view, there should be a strict rule that all posts, including all senior posts, must have technically detailed and published job descriptions before they are filled. This would make glaringly obvious any attempt to appoint candidates without the right qualifications. It would strongly deter any pressures and protect executive heads from such pressures. Years ago, ICSC recommended that the Organizations of the United Nations family maintain a system of job design and job classification based on job content.

114. Similarly, without concrete criteria to adhere to, OHRM screening of applications submitted by the entire range of recruitment sources --including missions and foreign ministries-- varies with the quality of the recruitment officer, the degree of pressure exerted on behalf of a candidate, etc., and the degree of objectivity he can bring to the list[30].

115. On a related issue that affects both promotions and, more especially recruitment, some Member States believe the mandatory qualification requirements identified in vacancy announcements for both internal and external candidates are seriously out of step with market realities. At the forty-ninth session of the General assembly, they urged the

Secretary-General to examine this issue urgently with a view to developing more realistic mandatory qualification requirements for posts at all levels.

8. Absence of planning

116. Any textbook or successful management practitioner includes planning as the starting point for effective management. Obviously, there is a lack of planning at various levels within the Organization. Despite the existence of the Medium-Term Plan, there is no clearly and simply formulated strategic or corporate plan that succinctly outlines future directions for the United Nations. In the Inspectors' view, administration of the public service cannot be reduced to mere personnel management as, by losing sight of the question as a whole, it would make personnel policy completely ineffective by abandoning it to improvisation. In its recent report on "Review and assessment of efforts to restructure the regional dimension of United Nations economic and social activities"[31] the JIU pointed to the necessity of establishing a strategic analysis and strategic planning facility in the United Nations Secretariat.

117. In Recommendation 2 of the above report, the Inspectors emphasized that "This facility should not replace the substantive technical thinking and planning that other departments are providing but concentrate on general strategic organizational and management aspects from the overall perspective of the United Nations"[32]. For the purpose of the present report, it may be specified that human resources management should be an integral part of this strategic planning.

118. It will be recalled that as far back as 1982, ICSC recommended to the General Assembly and the governing bodies of the Organizations of the United Nations system that they consider the concept of human resources planning as a basis for a systematic approach to integrated personnel management and that they pursue the development of a planning process based on the particular needs and capabilities of their organization in close co-ordination with the Commission's further study programme in this area. In this context, certain recommendations made by the JIU concerning standard career paths in clearly defined occupational groups, desirable percentages for external recruitment, and average rates of advancement, were referred to as having particular relevance.

119. Absence of planning in human resources management may have destructive consequences. And this is what in effect has happened recently in the United Nations. Lack of planning appears to have been one of the major reasons for erosion of the human resources management function.

120. The Inspectors found that there has been no recruitment plan since 1989. It will be recalled that, in its resolution 35/210, the General Assembly mandated that an annual work plan of recruitment be established and that the Secretary-General report each year on implementation of the plan, which should indicate:

(i) general data on the estimated number of recruitments by grade and broad occupational groups;

(ii) the targets to be reached during the year as to the number of candidates to be recruited from unrepresented and under-represented countries and among women, in accordance with the targets established by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(iii) the various means by which recruitment will be undertaken, such as competitive examinations, publicity or recruitment missions.

121. The reasons given by OHRM for not doing a recruitment plan included: (a) the retrenchment exercise which was completed in 1990-91; (b) the subsequent restructuring of departments; and (c) the imposition of the recruitment freeze in 1992.

122. Even more surprisingly, during their enquiry the Inspectors found that the Organization which counts some 11,000 regular budget staff had no staffing table. This explains why only in December 1994, after repeated requests from the General Assembly, the Secretariat could produce the list of the Secretariat staff[33].

123. Neither had OHRM Departments' requests for recruitment in a consolidated form, which excludes the very possibility of planning. The absence of human resources planning also suggests that there is no structured approach to recruitment of officers, thus making it a purely haphazard exercise.

C. Obsolete methods of recruitment

124. As follows from the above, little has changed in United Nations recruitment methods. Generally, recruitment is still being carried out in the same fashion as 15-20 years ago. As mentioned in the JIU report on the status of women[34], the present recruiting process seems dominated by an outdated organizational culture and "non-transparent" administrative processes. There is little evidence of a rigorous selection process to best fill staff posts with people who meet the requirements for "the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity", as required by article 101 of the United Nations Charter."[35]

125. It appears that evolution of recruitment practices elsewhere in the world; and even in the United Nations system, including the IBRD and IMF and even in UNRWA did not affect the Secretariat's practices. By the standards of other large organizations, particularly in the United Nations system, the procedures used in UNRWA are quite elaborate in their efforts to combat subjectivity which is reflected in the small number of unsatisfactory selections made. Indeed, the United Nations Secretariat has expressed an interest in UNRWA recruitment system and has informally enquired if UNRWA would be in a position to provide the training in selection procedures and skills for their staff. However, the United Nations Secretariat apparently did not follow up on its request.

D. Long delays

126. The average time required for United Nations recruitment procedures is about a year. There are many cases, however, when recruitment takes much longer (2-3 years). A number of factors explain recruitment delays. The one is delayed vacancy announcements. The OHRM complains that rather often it is not informed in time about forthcoming vacancies by the substantive departments. Programme managers often prefer not to announce posts even those to be filled through competitive examinations, but to keep them filled by staff members on short-term contracts, often for years. Such cases, for example, were identified by the Inspectors in the Conference Services.

127. Because of slow recruitment procedures, posts often remain vacant for a long time. This obviously affects delivery of the programmes concerned, especially if vacant posts are of a high managerial level. The Inspectors found, for example, that in UNCTAD as at December 1994, there were four vacant posts of directors of the following divisions: (a) Services Development and Trade Efficiency Division (since 1 January 1994), (b) International Trade Division (since 1 August 1994), (c) Division for Transnational Corporations and Investment (since 1 January 1994), (d) Division for Science and

Technology (since 1 April 1994). Vacant for a long time were also 2 posts of chiefs of service (both of D-1 level).

128. Long procedures also affect the recruitment of candidates who successfully passed competitive examinations. Many of these, having lost any hope of being recruited by the United Nations, in the meantime, secured employment elsewhere.

E. "Regularization"

129. Another deficiency in current recruitment practices is the so-called "regularization" of holders of short-term appointments. The most recent and striking example is an attempt to offer fixed-term contracts at the P-2 and P-3 level to some 17 short-term staff of the Centre for Human Rights, who have never passed the competitive examinations. Also in CHR, about 30 General Service staff are also being "regularized" uncontested. This sort of regularization certainly runs against the competitive recruitment emphasized by the Secretary-General in his most recent reports.

F. Absence of spouse recruitment programme

130. Absence of the above programme may also be considered as a deficiency of the current recruitment practices. Indeed, lack of such programme does not only affect mobility of the United Nations staff, but also deprives the Organization of valuable staff members in cases of transfer of staff members to duty stations where employment for their spouses cannot be secured. In the Inspectors' view, the relevant experience of IBRD and IMF, which have such programmes, should be studied.

V. ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT A PRO-ACTIVE, EFFECTIVE AND MODERN RECRUITMENT SYSTEM

131. A number of actions are required in order to transform the current recruitment system into a pro-active, effective and modern recruitment system.

A. Policy formulation

132. As mentioned in paragraph 21 above, the United Nations Secretariat needs a coherent, sound and transparent recruitment policy to translate into reality the guiding principles established by Member States. This policy should be modern. The Inspectors support the idea of the Secretary-General to the effect that one of the essential roles of OHRM will be the formulation and implementation of modern human resources policies. It should also be practicable, as any attempts to make the United Nations international civil service better than the best national civil service are doomed to failure.

133. An expanding civil service cannot achieve geographically balanced staffing, together with top quality, by passively accepting candidates who have simply applied, or who have been pressed onto it by governments. For the United Nations civil service it is not enough that a resume gives no reason why a person should not be recruited; there must be reasons why that particular person should be recruited. Attracting only the best on the basis of strict application of objective job-related criteria should be the main aim of the United Nations recruitment policy.

134. Recruitment policy should be active which, in particular, means that there must be positive and advanced outreach by the Secretariat to the total human reservoir, and that a roster of very thoroughly screened candidates should be maintained. It also implies that the Secretary-General must be immune to pressure from any member government over any post, at any level.

135. The Inspectors believe, however, that the best guarantee against this pressure could be the existence of open and transparent human resources management policies and their fair and consistent application across the board. The formulation of such policies should be a matter priority for the United Nations Secretariat. Any significant progress in human resources management is inconceivable unless such policies are devised and complied with.

B. Planning

136. As said elsewhere in the present report, planning is an essential part of recruitment. The Secretary-General recognized that the absence of planning capacity in human resources management had contributed significantly to current management weaknesses. He also reported that in the area of recruitment planning a strong emphasis would be placed on better communications between OHRM in its various locations and other offices in the Secretariat and on more focused search and analysis. There is also the understanding that, for greater effectiveness, human resources planning including recruitment planning should be tied to the overall strategic plan of the Organization.

C. Introduction of modern recruitment methods and procedures

137. Improved methods of recruitment is a key factor in enhancing the quality of the staff and its conformity with the high standards of competence and integrity called for by

the United Nations Charter. ICSC recommended considering recruitment in the context of the other elements of a comprehensive personnel policy, such as the desirable proportions of permanent and fixed-term staff, the implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution, uniform job classification standards, etc.

138. However modernization process has been delayed. Three major factors are responsible: (a) passivity of the Secretariat accustomed to its routines; (b) the two above-described suspensions of recruitment and (c) the lack of advanced information technology.

(a) Diversifying sources of recruitment

139. It will be recalled that resolution 35/210 provided, in particular, in order to increase the number of candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries and of women candidates, that timely and frequent publicity shall be made regarding vacancies and recruitment of personnel. This publicity was also recommended to be undertaken in co-operation with Member States, through information media, United Nations offices, universities and professional organizations, including women's organizations whenever appropriate, so as to enable the Office of Personnel Services to implement the personnel and recruitment policies adopted by Member States of the Organization.

140. The Inspectors observe that professional journals and magazines have been used only to a limited extent and such sources of recruitment as universities and professional organizations and such means as electronic bulletin boards have been largely ignored. By way of example, it can be mentioned that Internet Billboard has 50-60 million subscribers and represents the most modern and least expensive source of recruitment.

141. Utilization of the above means may: (a) enhance professional standards of newly recruited staff; (b) improve geographical distribution; and (c) reduce costs of recruitment. The Inspectors note with satisfaction that the Secretariat intends to conduct an aggressive and pro-active advertising and campus recruitment campaign in all regions to strengthen rosters of potential candidates and to reduce the lead-time in responding to the filling of vacancies.

(b) Structured interviews

142. Ten years ago, ICSC recommended that structured interviews or a series of such interviews should be a necessary component of the selection process[38]. They should all be conducted in a like manner so as to maximize objectivity and to prevent overall personality-related assessments which can be open to prejudice. Check-lists of useful questions to be asked and training in interviewing techniques should be given to the personnel officers and managers who conduct interviews.

143. While in the United Nations itself this recommendation remains unheeded, one of its entities, i.e., UNRWA reviewed seriously the system whereby the interviews had taken the form of one-to-one meetings between the candidate and each of the officials directly concerned with fulfilling of report. Structured Panel interviews, carried out by a board representing the hiring department, Administration and Human Resources Department and a neutral participant have been introduced. These interviews are sometimes supplemented by tests. In this context, the Inspectors believe that the experience of UNRWA as well as UNESCO, IBRD and IMF may prove to be useful.

D. Strengthening the Office of Human Resources Management

(a) Organization, functions and resources

144. In 1986, following recommendation 41 of the "Group of 18", the Office of Personnel Services was renamed "Office of Human Resources Management". But it was not only the name that had to change but also the functions of the Office and thus espouse the human resources management concept. However, OHRM has been functioning in the same fashion as OPS, i.e., administering the staff rather than managing human resources. Moreover, two essential functions such as policy co-ordination and especially human resources planning - the very basis of human resources management - have been abolished.

145. The fact that human resources management is a professional activity which requires specific competence has been paid due attention to in the United Nations Secretariat. The above-mentioned JIU report on the status of women[37] gives a detailed account of OHRM's weaknesses and proposes measures to strengthen its management capacities. Thus, to establish firm human resources planning, management, and reporting, the JIU first recommended establishing a small unit composed of two specialists at the senior professional level and with specific education and high-quality experience in human resources management. The OHRM should be allowed to recruit such specialists. The JIU believes that they would provide policy formulation and analysis on human resources policy issues, demographic and statistical studies, monitoring of human resources activities, and (in conjunction with OHRM and other managers) preparation of the biennial human resources report and special reporting on human resources issues.

146. The second recommendation was aimed at upgrading the human resources management qualifications and experience of OHRM senior and professional staff. Two successive OHRM heads in the course of their conversations with the Inspectors confirmed that OHRM's own staff lacks both professional training in the personnel area and grounding in the specific skills required. That only a few of the more senior OHRM staff presently had professional university backgrounds in personnel administration, human resources management or organizational development, and/or professional experience in these fields before joining OHRM.

147. Therefore, the JIU also recommended that future recruitment of OHRM staff pay priority attention to hiring people with specific and solid professional education and experience in human resources management. For professional staff already on board, efforts should be made where possible to identify and provide specific human resources training programmes at universities or through consultants. Of particular importance is training and practice in-depth interviewing.

(b) Authority

148. In its resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1980, the General Assembly asked the Secretary-General to ensure that the Office of Personnel Services had authority to implement effectively the personnel policies outlined in its relevant resolutions. OHRM has very little effective authority to enforce its actions or policies when they are challenged by other areas of United Nations management, the staff, or interested external parties and rarely exercises what little authority it has.

149. The Inspectors agree with the main ideas put forward by the new OHRM head who in particular emphasized that OHRM should be a service centre, transparent, communicative and above all that it should remain the central human resources authority,

the leader, the policy setter and the change maker. It must maintain quality and comparable applications worldwide. It must be the guardian of the Secretary-General's authority.

(c) Outside pressure

150. The "Group of 18", in its report, held that personnel policy and management in the United Nations had suffered as a result of the considerable political and other pressures that had influenced the selection of staff. Therefore, it recommended the Secretary-General to exercise greater leadership in personnel matters and ensure that the selection of staff is done strictly in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

151. The Group also recommended the Secretary-General to improve the management of human resources, protect the authority of the official in charge of personnel and instruct all other senior officials to refrain from influencing the selection of staff. Often this recommendation is ignored. Interference into the recruitment process from both missions representatives (often not supported by any official request from respective missions) and United Nations senior officials acquired significant proportions. Very often, pressure is brought to bear not only over senior posts but over the most modest ones, including those in the General Services category.

152. It will be recalled that in a number of its resolutions including resolution 47/226, the General Assembly reiterated its full support for the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, and underlined its full respect for his prerogatives and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. The Inspectors believe that there is much more harm than good in any attempts aimed at micro-management of the Organization.

(d) Decentralization

153. As shown above, OHRM has enormous difficulties in handling human resources alone. Devolution of responsibilities from OHRM to departments would be an acceptable change. Management of staff must be the responsibility of departmental, divisional and other managers and supervisors. As the Secretary-General stressed in his Fifth Committee statement during the forty-eight session of the General Assembly, the managers of the United Nations must manage the human resources of the Organization. One of the benefits of this approach would be the avoidance of duplication.

154. Most international civil services have introduced decentralized or devolved management of responsibilities to programme managers. In giving more responsibility to programme managers, it is appropriate to provide them with policies and some incentives in their management of resources.

155. While welcoming the decentralization of human resources management in principle, the Inspectors believe that it would be premature and counter-productive to delegate such essential functions as "hire", "fire" and "promote" in the absence of (a) clearly formulated policies in these areas; (b) adequate training of officials who would be dealing with respective issues in the offices away from Headquarters and substantive departments; and (c) an established mechanism of responsibility and accountability for human resources management.

156. In this connection, it will be recalled that, in the statement made to the Fifth Committee on 15 November 1994 on behalf of the staff of the United Nations Secretariat, references were made to the effect that "Chief administrative officers of missions, heads

of offices away from Headquarters and even individual department heads and executive officers interpret staff rules and regulations to suit their needs, deviate in the application of personnel policies and create new personnel policies without consultation with senior management or staff representatives".

157. The transition of responsibilities from OHRM to departments will need to be carefully managed and monitored. A starting point in this process could be the use of OHRM/department consultative and implementation committees.

158. The Inspectors strongly believe that decentralization of essential functions in the area of human resources management can take place only after:

(a) human resources management policies are formulated as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report A/C.5/49/5;

(b) all personnel procedures and methods are reviewed and improved, as required by General Assembly resolution 47/226;

(c) proper demarcation of responsibilities in the area of human resources management is established between OHRM and other offices and departments at and away from Headquarters; and

(d) appropriate mechanisms for reporting, accountability and follow-up are put in place.

159. In this connection, the Inspectors would like to recall that, in its resolution 47/226, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to review and improve, where necessary, all personnel policies and procedures with a view to making them more simple, transparent and relevant to the new demands placed upon the Secretariat. The Inspectors believe that it would be useful, after the above is done, to issue a long-awaited Human Resources Management Manual which could be used as a main reference source by all the officials to whom relevant responsibilities will be delegated.

160. While completing the present report, the Inspectors came across the memorandum of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management dated 7 November 1994 on the responsibility, authority and accountability of managers. This is a very encouraging step toward improving managerial accountability. However, it appears to place extensive emphasis on financial resources and programme implementation, but says almost nothing about managers' responsibilities for the proper management of human resources for which they are responsible. In this respect, it will be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 48/218[38], explicitly required to establish a mechanism ensuring that the programme managers are accountable for effective management of not only financial but also personnel resources allocated to them.

Notes

1. "Advancement of the Status of Women in the United Nations Secretariat in an era of 'human resources management' and 'accountability': a new beginning?", document JIU/REP/94/3, A/49/176 of 17 June 1994.

2. "Human resource management policies. Report of the Secretary-General", document A/49/445 of 29 September 1994.

3. "Personnel questions", General Assembly resolution 47/226 of 30 April 1993, p. 2, para. 3.

4. The Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations established by General Assembly resolution 40/237 of 18 December 1985. In 1986, the Group issued the report (document A/41/49) requested by the above resolution.

5. "A strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization. Report of the Secretary-General", document A/C.5/49/5 of 21 October 1994.

6. "Toward a new system of performance appraisal in the United Nations Secretariat: requirements for successful implementation", document JIU/REP/94/5, A/49/219 of August 1994.

7. A/C.5/49/5, op. cit.

8. "Composition of the Secretariat. Report of the Secretary-General", document A/49/527 of 17 October 1994.

9. "A/49/445, op.cit.

10. "Personnel questions", General Assembly resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1978, preamble.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., Section I, para 2.

13. See, for example, Bertrand, Maurice, "The recruitment policy of United Nations staff", in De Cooker, Chris, Ed., International administration: Law and management practices in international organisations, UNITAR, UN Sales No. E.90.III.KST/29, Martine Nijhoff, the Netherlands, 1989, pages II, 1-4 and 8.

14. Document A/49/527, op.cit., p. 8.

15. Bertrand, Maurice, op.cit., p. 2/7.

16. ST/SGB/247 of 6 February 1992.

17. Report of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination on the work of its thirty-second session, document A/47/16, para. 252.

18. Resolution 47/226, op.cit., section 1A, operative para. 5.

19. ST/AI/213/Rev.1 of 18 July 1984.

20. Ibid.

Annex I

VACANCY STATISTICS OF AUTHORIZED POSTS FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 UNDER THE REGULAR BUDGET
AS OF MARCH 1994
(By Section)

SECTION	PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY			GENERAL SERVICE			TOTAL		
	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate
01 Overall Policy-Making, Direction and Co-ordination	48	3	6.3	72	0	0.0	120	3	2.5
03 Political Affairs	184	19	10.3	144	0	0.0	328	19	5.8
04 Peace-Keeping Operations	46	5	10.9	407	5	1.2	453	10	2.2
05 International Court of Justice	24	0	0.0	37	0	0.0	61	0	0.0
07 Legal Activities	83	11	13.3	78	5	6.4	161	16	9.9
08 Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable	124	0	0.0	107	0	0.0	231	0	0.0
09 Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis	147	6	4.1	130	1	8	277	7	2.5
10 Department for Development Support and Management Services	70	2	2.9	109	0	0.0	179	2	1.1
11A United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	258	14	5.4	196	5	2.6	454	19	4.2
12A United Nations Environment Programme	35	4	11.4	49	2	4.1	84	6	7.1
12B United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	48	13	27.1	45	2	4.4	93	15	16.1
13 International Crime Control	14	0	0.0	6	0	0.0	20	0	0.0
14 International Drug Control	43	3	7.0	28	0	0.0	71	3	4.2
15 Economic Commission for Africa	225	13	5.8	383	11	2.9	608	24	3.9
16 Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	184	20	10.9	328	7	2.1	512	27	5.3

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21. "Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)", document JIU/REP/93/6, A/48/421 of 19 October 1993.

22. Resolution 47/226, section A.1, para. 1.

23. Ibid., section A.2, paras 2 and 3.

24. Armstrong, Michael and Lorentzen, John F. Handbook of personnel management practice: procedures, guidelines, checklists and model forms, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.Y., 1982, pp. 97-98.

25. ST/AI/392 of 27 January 1994.

26. Fromouth, Peter and Raymond, Ruth, UN personnel policy issues. United Nations Association of the United States of America, NY, 1986, p. 38.

27. Bertrand, Maurice, op.cit., p. II. 2/6.

28. Childers, Eskine and Urquhart Brian, "Renewing the United Nations system", in Development dialogue, 1994:1., pp. 159-162.

29. Armstrong, Michael and Lorentzer, John F., op. cit., p. 83.

30. Fromouth, Peter, op.cit., p. 38.

31. "Review and assessment of efforts to restructure the regional dimension of United Nations economic and social activities", document JIU/REP/94/6, A/49/423 of 22 September 1994.

32. Ibid., p. 37.

33. List of staff of the United Nations Secretariat as of 30 September 1994. Report of the Secretary-General. Document ST/ADM/R.47, December 1994.

34. JIU/REP/94/3, A/49/176, op cit.

35. Ibid., p. 12.

36. See CFPI, "Entretien avec le candidat. Note du secretariat de la Commission de la fonction publique internationale", document ICSC/19/R.17, 15 fevrier 1984.

37. JIU/REP/94/3, A/49/176, op.cit., pp. 26-30.

38. "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", General Assembly resolution 48/218, section E, para. 4.

Annex I (continued)

VACANCY STATISTICS OF AUTHORIZED POSTS FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 UNDER THE REGULAR BUDGET
AS OF MARCH 1994
(By Section)

SECTION	PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY			GENERAL SERVICE			TOTAL		
	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate	Authorized	Vacant	Vacancy Rate
17 Economic Commission for Europe	115	6	5.2	92	0	0.0	207	6	2.9
18 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	178	10	5.6	348	0	0.0	526	10	1.9
19 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	98	19	19.4	191	8	4.2	289	27	9.3
21 Centre for Human Rights	84	16	19.0	53	8	15.1	137	24	17.5
22A Protection and Assistance to Refugees (UNHCR)	89	4	4.5	155	0	0.0	244	4	1.6
22B Protection and Assistance to Refugees (UNRWA)	82	0	0.0	10	1	10.0	92	1	1.1
23 Department of Humanitarian Affairs	42	13	31.0	30	5	16.7	72	18	25.0
24 Public Information	303	13	4.3	494	0	0.0	797	13	1.6
25 Administration and Management	1272	50	3.9	2535	26	1.0	3807	76	2.0
26 Jointly Financed Administrative Activities	29	3	10.3	36	1	2.8	65	4	6.2
31 Inspections and Investigations	40	5	12.5	23	0	0.0	63	5	7.9
90 Revenue Producing	26	1	3.8	134	0	0.0	160	1	6
GRAND TOTALS	3891	253	6.5	6220	87	1.4	10111	340	3.4

Note: Section 8 (Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development) was not received by the time this report was prepared.

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Annex II

United Nations occupational groups

Administration

Economics

Electronic data processing

Engineering, architecture and related work

Finance

Languages

Legal affairs and related work

Library and related work

Nursing and related work

Political affairs and related work

Public information

Security and related work

Social development

Statistics

UNITED NATIONS

Competitive Examinations Interview Evaluation Form

Last Name: **First:** **Occup. Group: (P2)** **Place:**

I. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE:

(a) Educational Environment

irrelevant [ ] relevant [ ] highly relevant [ ]

Comments:

(b) Work Environment

irrelevant [ ] relevant [ ] highly relevant [ ]

Comments:

II. GENERAL INTERESTS:

Limited [ ] good [ ] broad [ ]

Comments:

III. INTEREST IN THE UNITED NATIONS:

Superficial [ ] Good [ ] High [ ]

Comments:

IV. INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

Superficial [ ] Good [ ] high [ ]

Comments:

V. WORK-MOTIVATION:

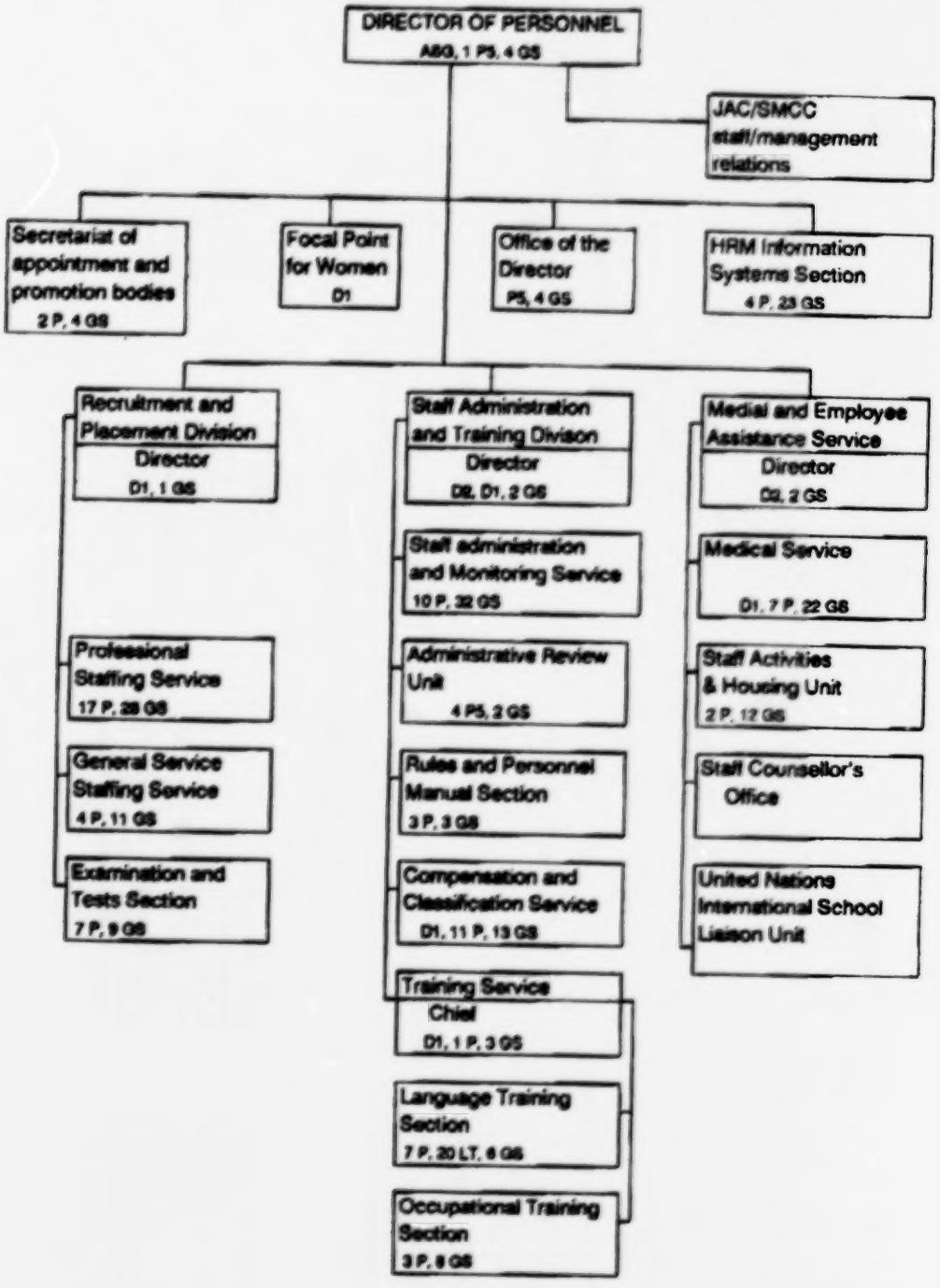
Low [ ] good [ ] high [ ]

Comments:

VI. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

slow	quick
unsure of oneself	self-confident
inhibited	forthcoming
arrogant	modest
emotional	self-controlled
vague	precise
lacking in curiosity	endowed with a curious mind
inappropriate appearance	appropriate appearance
unrealistic	endowed with common sense
aggressive	assertive
superficial	thorough
narrow-minded	open-minded
undecided	determined
immature	mature
uncooperative	cooperative
passive	dynamic
disorganized	methodical

ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



I. INTRODUCTION

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Inspection of the application of United Nations recruitment, placement and promotion policies" was prepared by Inspectors F. Bouayad-Agha and H. Hernandez, at the Inspectors' initiative.

2. The Secretary-General welcomes this initiative. The recognition on the part of the Inspectors that the Secretary-General has set in motion a new human resources management team, strategy and approach is welcomed. As the Inspectors have rightly noted, in both the body of their report and in their specific recommendations, the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization, set out in document A/C.5/49/5, analyses the inadequacy of the current policies and systems and proposes a comprehensive strategy and programme to address them. This strategy was endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session in its resolution 49/222. A number of the elements of the strategy focusing on the critical areas of recruitment, placement and promotion coincide fully with the Inspectors' views in such areas as the importance of planning and policy coordination; vacancy management; work planning and performance appraisal management; job design and classification and their link to successfully recruiting and managing staff; decentralization and delegation of authority with a corresponding system to ensure accountability and responsibility (including in the management of human resources); and, above all, the need to create a management (as opposed to procedural, administrative) environment and culture within the Organization "that is supportive of having staff members contribute to their maximum potential, effectiveness and efficiency".

3. The human resources management strategy also shares fully the Inspectors' specific views on the need to enhance such recruitment systems and tools of communication with substantive departments, recruitment planning and vacancy management, roster development and management, proactive advertising (including through electronic means), the internship programme, campus recruitment campaigns, structured panel interviews, renewed cooperation with Member States and professional institutions to identify qualified men and women candidates and streamlined recruitment procedures. The support extended by the General Assembly, in terms of both its endorsement of the strategy and the provision of additional limited budgetary resources to develop a planning and policy coordination capacity within the Office of Human Resources Management represents a modest step forward towards addressing the legitimate concerns expressed by the Inspectors.

4. The Secretary-General regrets, however, that the Inspectors apparently overlooked the impact of the United Nations uncompetitive compensation package as it relates to recruiting and retaining staff. By so doing, the Inspectors missed a significant problem in the Organization's difficulty to attract and retain the very best professionals to its various programmes. More proactive recruitment for quality professionals as correctly advocated by the Inspectors requires that the United Nations be competitive in the international professional marketplace, regardless of the nationality, or often place of recruitment, of the candidate in question. The present salary package falls

short in respect of such persons who have other options for employment whether, for example, in Japan, South East Asia, Europe or North America.

5. There are a number of areas covered in the report that reflect misunderstandings and require clarification or commentary.

II. COMMENTS ON GENERAL FINDINGS

Paragraph 75

6. It is recognized that recruitment at the P-3 level through the competitive examination process has been rather slow, in that such recruitment has had to be balanced - in effect, has had to compete - with recruitment through regular recruitment channels that are still prevalent at the P-3 level. In 1995, to the extent possible, a more systematic approach to the use of competitive examinations will be adopted for appointment at the P-3 level. A system more responsive to Member States and programme managers is being sought.

Paragraph 77

7. It is not clear how the Inspectors reached the cost estimates for recruitment at the P-3 level, since such examinations are conducted within the overall budget for competitive examinations at the P-2 level. It should be noted that recruitment through the competitive examination process represents a long-term investment for the Organization, which can be "amortized" over the career of those recruited. However, cost effectiveness studies will be initiated this year.

Paragraphs 78 and 79

8. The assertion that the general level of candidates is rather low is not borne out by their success in the Secretariat. Previous studies have shown that their rate of advancement is faster than that of other recruits (A/C.5/40/39, paras. 11-16, and A/49/445, paras. 41-44). However, this perception indicates a lack of programme managers' involvement in the recruitment process.

Paragraph 80

9. The Office of Human Resources Management agrees with the views of the Inspectors on the use of probationary appointments on initial appointment and has taken appropriate measures to discontinue the practice, pending a change in the appropriate staff rule.

Paragraphs 81 and 82

10. It should be recalled that the competitive examination process was established by the General Assembly to identify the best candidates in each Member State. Such considerations notwithstanding, in order to be recommended for recruitment, every candidate must meet a high standard of performance as demonstrated through written and oral examinations and interviews. Interviews are indeed designed to assess personal attitudes and communication skills of the

candidates; professional knowledge and skills are tested in the written and oral examinations. However, the balance between examinations and interviews needs careful reconsideration.

Paragraph 85, last sentence

11. While it is recognized that programme managers may have, on occasion, a leading candidate in mind, the system encourages competition. Drawing on candidates proposed by programme managers is not in itself a bad practice, providing that gender and geographical representation are respected.

Paragraph 99

12. It is recognized that larger fields of candidates need to be identified to fill vacancies and it is anticipated that improvements in this regard will be attained through an enhanced planning capacity and the implementation of the human resources strategy (A/C.5/49/5) elements pertaining to recruitment. It is however inaccurate to state that "the general practice" has been "to identify posts available for candidates known in advance".

Paragraphs 100-103

13. Contrary to what is stated in these paragraphs, the United Nations does have standards for the recruitment of staff at various levels in the Professional category and above. These were provisionally revised in November 1994 to take into account the changing market situation and efforts to improve the representation of women in the Secretariat as well as the need for managerial experience at senior levels. It should be noted that candidates recruited to Professional posts at the P-3 level and above meet high standards of qualifications: they have advanced university degrees in their field of work and relevant professional experience commensurate with the level of the post concerned. However, work needs to be done as proposed by the Inspectors.

Paragraphs 107 and 108

14. These issues should be facilitated once the Integrated Management Information Systems (IMIS) is fully operational and when training in roster management is undertaken.

Paragraphs 110 and 114

15. Duly completed and classified job descriptions exist for all posts up to the D-1 level. A brief description of those functions, derived from the job description, is incorporated into circulated vacancy announcements. The Office of Human Resources Management also reviews on an advisory basis job descriptions for posts at the D-2 level. Moreover, statements of work assignments and responsibilities of all staff developed through the system of accountability and responsibility and the performance appraisal system will provide guidance in the future. All candidatures are reviewed against these job descriptions by the Office of Human Resources Management and the appointment and promotion bodies. Some generic job descriptions have already been developed and efforts in this area will continue. The modest resources of the Office of Human Resources

Management do not facilitate the updating classification/job description exercise.

Paragraph 115

16. The recently revised recruitment standards referred to in the context of paragraphs 101 and 103 also take into account market conditions, although more work must be done.

Paragraphs 116-120

17. As indicated in the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization, the views of the Inspectors with regard to the importance of planning for human resources management cannot be too strongly emphasized. The establishment of such capacity within the Office of Human Resources Management over the course of 1995 is expected to go far in addressing the concerns and deficiencies that currently prevail. It should also be noted that the new Performance Appraisal System will introduce performance indicators that measure the managerial skills of programme managers, including their efforts to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. Moreover, the Office of Human Resources Management will be conducting management skills training programmes aimed at enhancing precisely the type of managerial skills that will not only help in the process of recruiting staff of the "highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity" but also create a management culture and environment that enables them to contribute to their full potential to the work of the Organization.

III. COMMENTS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

18. As indicated above, the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization is very much in line with the Inspectors' recommendations. They will be fully taken into account in the implementation by the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretary-General's strategy.

Recommendation 1

19. The Secretary-General has just published the second edition of the Personnel Administrators Handbook, which, although not precisely the type of manual indicated by the Inspectors, to a large degree serves the anticipated purpose. In addition, as a matter of course, personnel policies and practices are being reviewed with a view to rationalizing them and making them more transparent. However, a human resources management manual is greatly needed. The Inspectors' proposals in the second part of the recommendation are in keeping with the Secretary-General's strategy.

Recommendations 2 and 3

20. The Inspectors' points are well taken and, to the extent feasible, will be applied.

Recommendation 4

21. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee is tentatively reviewing the desirability of proposing the extension of the retirement age of staff up to the age of 62.

Recommendations 5 and 6

22. The comments made under paragraph 77 apply. Competitive examinations have been the subject of several studies and analyses by both the Secretariat and Member States. The list of studies already conducted includes the following:

1.	Report by two consultants to the Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel (analysis of G to P and national recruitment examinations)	July 1984
2.	Report of the Secretary-General to the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/40/39)	November 1985
3.	Report of the JIU (A/39/483)	September 1984
4.	Report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC/21/R.21)	February 1985
5.	Report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations (Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49))	1986
6.	Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/49/445)	September 1994

None the less, the Secretary-General will report to the General Assembly on the conduct of recruitment activities as well as the use of national competitive examinations, including the P-3 level, in the context of normal reporting procedures. It should also be noted that the examinations have wide support from Member States.

Recommendation 7

23. The first part of this recommendation is fully in line with the Secretary-General's strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization. As regards competitive exams, the prevailing view in the Secretariat is that completive exams bring well qualified candidates to the Organization. Previous studies have shown that their rate of advancement is faster than that of other recruits. Comments on paragraphs 78 and 79 of the report refer.

Recommendation 8

24. The Secretariat fully agrees with this recommendation and has already taken measures to implement it.

Recommendation 9

25. The Inspectors' suggestions regarding the format and content of rosters are appreciated and will be used when improving the existing inadequacies.

IV. CONCLUSION

26. The Secretary-General wishes to express his appreciation for the Inspectors' research and efforts leading to their thought-provoking observations and recommendations. In taking action on many of the recommendations, the Office of Human Resources Management looks forward to working closely with JIU and Member States.